

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ADDIS 04753 060715Z
ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 EUR-08 NEA-07
PM-03 SP-02 L-01 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 IO-06
DHA-02 ACDA-10 /068 W
-----004904 060721Z /13/53

P R 051025Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5127
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 4753

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (P A R A # 2)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MASS, ET, SO, US
SUBJECT: MEETING AUG 4 WITH MENGISTU

REF: ADDIS ABABA 4752

1. IN ATTEMPTING MAKE SOME SENSE OUT OF SUDDEN AUG 4 SUMMONS
BY MENGISTU, SEVERAL POINTS STAND OUT:

A. MENGISTU COVERED LITTLE NEW GROUND. MUCH OF WHAT HE
HAD TO SAY WAS EITHER REPETITION WITH SOME VARIATION OF HIS
REMARKS AT PREVIOUS MEETING, OR RESTATEMENT OF ETHIOPIA'S
CONCERN WITH OUR ARMS DECISION VIS-A-VIS SOMALIA ALREADY
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CONVEYED TO ME BY FONMIN. YET HE TOOK ALMOST TWO HOURS OUT
OF WHAT MUST BE VERY CROWDED SCHEDULE TO DO IT.

B. TONE OF MEETING WAS QUIET, ALMOST RELAXED, AND VERY
SIMILAR TO MORE-IN-SORROW-THAN-ANGER ATMOSPHERE OF MY MEET-
ING WITH FONMIN EARLIER THIS WEEK. MENGISTU'S COMMENTS WERE
GENERALLY RESTRAINED. MORE COLORFUL LANGUAGE OF PREVIOUS

MEETING INCLUDING IMPLIED THREATS IN DISCUSSING BILATERAL RELATIONS WAS LARGELY MISSING, ALTHOUGH HE SUCCEEDED IN COVERING WHOLE GAMUT OF ETHIOPIAN COMPLAINTS WITH OUR ALLEGED ACTIONS SINCE INDEPENDENCE. HE ATTEMPTED PRESENT PICTURE OF GREAT PATIENCE ON ETHIOPIA'S PART IN FACE OF OUR "MISTAKES" AND ALLEGED INABILITY TO UNDERSTAND REVOLUTION AND INSECURITY PROBLEMS IN HORN, IN PROCESS OF WHICH HE HAD SOME OF HIS FACTS WRONG SUCH AS SLOW PHASEOUT OVER LONG PERIOD OF TIME OF USIS AND NAMRU. FAULT WAS CLEARLY OURS FOR PRESENT STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE CONCEDED NO ETHIOPIAN "MISTAKES," AND ATTEMPTED CONVINCE US THAT WHAT ETHIOPIA WAS DOING WAS NOT CONTRARY TO OUR INTERESTS. HIS REFERENCE TO AID FOR "FEUDALISTS" ET AL IN SUDAN WAS PROBABLY REFERENCE TO REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO EDU OFFICER CAPTURED IN JUNE (ADDIS 3748).

C. HE CERTAINLY WANTED US TO GET MESSAGE THAT ETHIOPIA WAS SOVEREIGN STATE, ACTING IN ITS OWN BEST INTERESTS AND BEHOLDEN TO NO ONE (REFERENCE TO SOVIETS WAS OBVIOUS). ETHIOPIA WAS AND INTENDED REMAIN NON-ALIGNED AND WANTED PLAY ITS PROPER ROLE IN AFRICAN CONTEXT.

D. DESPITE ALL THAT HAS HAPPENED, ETHIOPIA WANTS TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH US. REFERENCE TO HIS DESIRE SEND AN AMBASSADOR WAS FIRST TIME WE HAVE HEARD SUBJECT MENTIONED IN MONTHS, AND HIS DESIRE THAT I CONVEY HIS APPRECIATION TO PRESIDENT CARTER FOR PRESIDENT'S EXPRESS-
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ED DESIRE TO IMPROVE (NORMALIZE) RELATIONS SEEMED GENUINE ENOUGH (EVEN GIVEN ETHIOPIAN PENCHANT FOR TELLING OTHERS WHAT THEY THINK THEY WANT TO HEAR). INDEED, AT ONE POINT, HE EVEN ADDRESSED ME AS "FRIEND"* HIS REMINISCENCES OF HIS EARLIER CONTACTS WITH AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL AND TO SPILLING BLOOD TOGETHER WOULD ALSO SEEM TO FIT.

E. ETHIOPIAN SENSITIVITY TO HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS WAS AGAIN EVIDENT.

2. FACT THAT MEETING TOOK PLACE AT ALL AND AT MENGISTU'S INITIATIVE MAY BE MOST SIGNIFICANT FEATURE OF WHOLE EXERCISE. JUST POSSIBLY MENGISTU, PERHAPS UNDER PRESSURE OF EVENTS, IS BEGINNING TO THINK IN TERMS OF VALUE OF DIALOGUE. AT ANY RATE, HE WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO EXPLAIN ETHIOPIA'S POSITIONS ON VARIETY OF SUBJECTS. FACT THAT HE ASKED FOR NOTHING (I WAS BRACED FOR PITCH THAT WE PERMIT DELIVERY OF REMAINING MILITARY MATERIAL PAID FOR BY ETHIOPIA) SUGGESTS ETHIOPIANS UNDERSTAND MILITARY RELATIONSHIP IS OVER, YET I HAVE NAGGING FEELING THAT ONE OF PURPOSES OF MEETING MAY HAVE BEEN TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR SOMETHING TO COME LATER ON. AT ANY RATE,

WHILE MENGISTU STILL BELIEVES WHAT HE WANTS TO BELIEVE
ABOUT STATUS OF OUR RELATIONS AND HOW THEY GOT THERE. I
HAD DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS LEAVING DOOR TOWARD
POSSIBLE IMPREOVEMENT OF RELATIONS OPEN SOMEWHAT WIDER
THAN HE DID AT LAST MEETING. TIME WILL TELL. IN THIS
CONNECTION, HOWEVER, FOUR DAYS HAVE NOW PASSED WITHOUT
SINGLE REFERENCE TO AMERICAN IMPERIALISM OR CIA IN
ETHIOPIAN HERALD (EXCEPT IZVESTIA ARTICLE), AND MEDIA
HAVE TOTALLY REFRAINED FROM COMMENTING ON MY PUBLISHED
REMARKS RE ARMS FOR SOMALIA.
TIENKEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SALES, ARMS, MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ADDIS04753
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770291-0418
Format: TEL
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770895/aaaadbzw.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 080a7061-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 77 ADDIS ABABA 4752
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1704250
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING AUG 4 WITH MENGISTU
TAGS: PBOR, MASS, ET, SO, US, (MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM), (MENGISTU)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/080a7061-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009